



Pedagogy and “Civilisation”: misinterpretation, coercion and unreflexivity in education

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Controversies surrounding matters of education or socialisation are not new. Fortunately, there exists more than merely one ideal conception of education. Relations between educators and educands, the shaping of a young person and his/her value system, preparing the young for participation in the world including equipping them with the competences necessary to understand, perceive or transform reality, have always provoked heated debates that never reach unequivocal conclusions. Questions concerning the roles of parents, educators, and teachers have also triggered a number of problems. Who should enter the role of educator? What kind of qualities should educators possess? What should they teach? How should they influence their pupils? These questions, however, have never been limited to parents and children, educators and educands. Indeed, educational discourses have always referred to various institutions: the state, churches, political parties and, of course, the school. Each of them has presented its particular vision of education, emphasising the obvious advantages of a given proposition and denouncing other suggestions. Reflecting on the existing pedagogical ideas, one cannot overlook the fact that apart from issues concerning the education process itself, pedagogy has ideological aspects and refers to questions of world-view or power/submission relations.

Education is no longer simply the matter of a personal relationship between a parent and a child, but it has become an institutionalised process of indoctrination and adjustment to the existing social, political and cultural conditions. Education and socialisation constitute key elements in the process of producing individuals according to the authority's intentions, needs and requirements. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that in pedagogical theories one can find ideologies that provide justifications

for “individual good” that may be fulfilled only due to the dogmatic reproduction of the proposed patterns. In this context, one cannot ignore the functions of a hidden curriculum in getting a young person adjusted to the existing conditions by his/her unaware and docile subjugation to the will of dominant institutions. Indeed, controversies concerning pedagogical theories take the form of an open conflict concerning ideas, according to which, people must be educated, roles which new generations must be prepared or moulded for, pupil’s consciousness or its absence, and, finally, the contexts of education whether one emphasises adaptation to the present conditions or human emancipation from these conditions whenever men and women consider them constraining.

Various pedagogical doctrines also reflect social changes, intersecting with themes of the Left and the Right, democratic and totalitarian systems, post-modernity, globalisation, post-colonialism and many others. The diversity of ideas results from a search for ways of responding to a multidimensional reality and to all aspects of life in it. Thus one can find trends in pedagogy (such as critical pedagogy), which rest on “Freedom” as the major educational concept that shapes the understanding of one’s *self in the world*, as well as those that recognise submission to ideas or institutions as something absolutely desirable (e.g. education in totalitarian states).

There are theories that underline the significance of traditional education and those that examine such types of education closely and deconstruct them in order to show their coercive aspects. Among some (relatively) new theories, there are those presenting a new approach to education and upbringing. Some of them abolish education altogether, emphasising that “those who love children, do not educate them” (anti-pedagogy), while others argue that adequate education might foster human liberation from social constraints (emancipatory pedagogy). Critical pedagogies emphasise individuals’ uniqueness, their right to self-determination and questioning truths that remain irrefutable. Such approaches inevitably worry all those participants of the education process, who perceive human liberation as a threat.

It is in this context outlined above, that one can read the issue of the *Civilisation* journal focused on pedagogy (*Civilisation. Pedagogy with tradition towards tomorrow*; Polish title: “Cywilizacja” *Pedagogika z tradycją w jutro*, 2007, no 22). One has to notice that the major themes, which the journal’s authors focus on, are traditional pedagogy and personalistic philosophy. The publishers seem to allow no alternative to these ideas and argue that any other theory is damaging, restrictive, distorts a child and its relationship with parents or teachers, or creates an inappropriate multidimensional view of the world. The pedagogical issue of *Civilisation* contains materials from the Sixth National Conference of Teachers and Educators organised under the title *Classical pedagogy in the face of challenges of the present days* in Lublin on March 3rd, 2007. The purpose of the conference – according to the journal’s editors – was *to show the propositions of classical pedagogy and their value for solving today’s educational problems* (ibid., p. 6). A number of authors present their reflections on the changing reality,

arguing that only traditional approaches to education and references to personalism provide an opportunity to teach human beings to distinguish Good from Evil, bestow them with properly shaped personalities and moral judgements, and in addition ensure that they function normally according to their religious beliefs. The articles touch upon themes such as religion, nation and teaching the virtues that will help the educands find their path in their daily lives. There are also numerous references to the traditional pedagogical ideas of Herbart, Woroniecki and Nawroczyński. The texts are diverse as far as their specific focus and scholarly level are concerned. However, what binds them together, is the visible fear of post-modernism (post-modernity) and an aversion to new educational conceptions such as critical and emancipatory pedagogies, but primarily towards anti-pedagogy, which is presented as the equivalent of educational evil.

The articles convey controversial views on education, the socio-political situation, schooling and the roles of the State and the Church. The authors strongly opt – despite all the long and notable changes in pedagogy – for a one-dimensional reality as the most predictable and secure, which leaves no room for doubts about the world because everything is already known and has been for a long time. The authors, who are unable to grasp post-modern ambivalence, approach the new theories irrationally. They do not attempt to understand these ideas, nor do they take into account the specific contexts from which these theories have emerged. The authors do not reflect on new ideas in pedagogy or new analyses of child-parent or pupil-educator relations. One will not find in these articles any attempt to recognise the ever-growing complexity of reality that requires educators to pose new questions, to search for solutions and to go beyond conventional ways of approaching education or socialisation. The authors seem to claim that anything that does not pass as (radically understood) personalism is wrong.

Appropriation of theory and one-dimensional pedagogy

Reading the pedagogical issue of *Civilisation* it is evident that the editors only offer a one-dimensional view of pedagogy. The authors have not made much effort to broaden their own perspectives or to understand changes in pedagogy or in the world. Indeed, what they want is to reconstruct a vision of the world that no longer exists, and they propose education models that bring to mind the exclusively correct patterns known from totalitarian ideologies. They appropriate a positive pedagogical concept by selecting only those of its components that can be formatted to serve a given doctrine in the ideological struggle. It is a pity that this is the way the authors perceive personalism, which Fr. Janusz Tarnowski (1992; 1993) had presented as a much more humane philosophy, based on respect for others and with an ability to create conditions for dialogue beyond one's personal constraints; the philosophy that is referred to in Korczak's pedagogy. The version of personalism and traditional pedagogy presented in

Civilisation does not respect difference, rejects dialogue, avoids alternative solutions and returns to the past. The authors do not even attempt to see beyond their own views. It is difficult to believe that such educational perspectives could present an interesting and effective proposition in the time of fluid modernity that constantly makes us search for new solutions, including in the field of pedagogy, by widening educational analysis of the world and moving into new spaces that traditional concepts have overlooked. Today, however, ignoring these new contexts seems unacceptable and such an approach reveals a misunderstanding of reality by the authors. The articles lack insight into geo-political, cultural or economic changes, and aspects of multicultural, intercultural or global education are absent. The authors do not reflect on contemporary transformations in family, social roles and interpersonal relations. In summary the narratives on personalist pedagogy as described in *Civilisation* constitute no more than some kind of wishful thinking and cannot be treated as an alternative to the pedagogies they criticise (but often do not even identify them correctly) and cannot provide solutions to the educational problems that they omit to mention. The authors do not allow themselves to see the world globally and they reject the fact that traditional education and personalism can be subject to transformations so that people could make use of them in the present. Indeed, what is being offered rests on assumptions of absolute theoretical petrification and a conviction that it is the world that should adjust to ideas, not the reverse. It is a false perspective as it *a priori* dooms these ideas to failure – not because they are wrong (indeed, one can at least hope that the authors assume their propositions are most effective for education), but because they do not even try to extend the view and test the perspectives and concepts they describe. I do not intend to negate the assumptions of personalist pedagogy (especially the version developed by Fr. Janusz Tarnowski) or of traditional models of education. I simply want to challenge the way these perspectives are conceived – that they reject rational polemic – which makes them marginalised, not because of content, but due to the form and attitude asserted by the authors of the articles in *Civilisation*.

To illustrate how the contributors to the issue of *Civilisation* deal with pedagogy, let us examine a few examples. A selected (according to an entirely subjective criteria) sample of passages provides us with a picture of the authors' approach to pedagogy and humankind, their rejection of dialogue, alternatives or any kind of difference. For instance, Henryk Kiereś, arguing about the essence of personalism, points out that

according to personalist tradition, education, that is, shaping of one's mind and human will, is a cultural fact, something given to us and universal to mankind. Factuality and universality of education prove it necessary for a human being as a human being, as it guarantees that everyone's life will be precisely and not accidentally (intentionally!) formed, and protects the heritage of tradition making historical intergenerational passage possible (Kiereś 2007, p. 13).

This definition delineates the field of thinking about traditional education. The author believes his view is the best idea for education. He takes aim at the libertarian and collectivist approaches in quite an unsophisticated manner. He claims that liberal perspective means merely securing individual freedom and autonomy, and the collectivist one creates qualityless individuals unable to control their own lives. In this view, personalism reaches a higher level since it gives an individual as much freedom as he or she needs and simultaneously leads him/her so that the individual should not doubt that he/she has control over his/her life. The author reduces his critique of collectivism and individualism to unpolished slogans such as the *individual is nothing*, the *individual is zero*, or, conversely, the *individual is everything*. The author's analysis is not much more in-depth than the slogans themselves. Arguing about education, Kiereś refers to various philosophical perspectives and reaches an unsurprising conclusion that people are different, so

for each person a suitable educational principle should be found. There are no universal educational "recipes" and if one searches for them, it can only lead to pedagogical reductionism (vide collectivism and individualism) and anti-pedagogy (ibid., p. 20).

While stressing that everyone has the right to their own quest, the aforementioned author negates this right by indicating that certain perspectives are essentially wrong. Therefore, he privileges personalism, *de facto* claiming it is the best idea. This privileged position of personalism consists on quite a simple assumption: if some idea cannot be qualified as personalist, then it is wrong. The author shows no interest in the significant differences between various aspects of liberal or libertarian approaches. He does not reflect on their multiple dimensions but emphasises that taken to their extremes they inevitably lead to anti-pedagogy, and such an argument seems sufficient to consider the liberal approach improper. Simultaneously mentioning thinkers as differing as Rousseau, Dewey, Russel or von Schoenebeck, the author does not even attempt to analyse their ways of thinking about freedom or their pedagogical assumptions. He treats collectivist education in a similar way. In his horrifying symmetry in approaching educational ideas (good vs. bad, right vs. wrong), he leaves no room for pedagogical pluralism. This totalitarian certainty in claiming primacy of specifically perceived personalism can be traced in many articles in the journal.

Another author, Mieczysław Krąpiec, sounds much more radical, when arguing about advantages of traditional pedagogy. He opens his reflections with quite a multi-faceted definition of education, which is

*an actualisation of human potential that we are bestowed with upon birth. Each human being is born with certain given traits, a soul created by God, a unique genetic code, which shapes one's body in the mother's womb, where a child starts to form its body beginning with the first divided cell. **One needs to be shaped in order to get educated**, so the next step in education takes place in society, nation and*

*family, which are the second womb where we all live, actualise our potential and realise ourselves. All this begins as early as when the mother starts speaking to her child during the first two years of its life. Without this speech the child, a new human being, would not exist. These early words form the child's spirit and establish eye and tactile contact; then the child learns how to distinguish – **these are the beginnings of education as actualisation of potentialities that the child possesses upon birth along with the vast amount of genetic code.** All this needs to be activated if the child is to become fully human. [next paragraph – P.R.] How does this actualisation come true? Today they want to impose on us modes of this process according to patterns developed by parties or through codified law, in foolish and irresponsible ways. **We live in such a system, in this kind of Europe where laws are made by a handful of people, and if we do not comply with this system, they will not give us money...** (Krapiec 2007, pp. 22-23) [bolded passages above and further – P.R.].*

One can thus ask; what kind of education does this definition offer? Does actualisation constitute a part of socialisation or education or upbringing, or resides in all of them? What does Europe have in common with education? In addition, does the quoted author challenge the legitimacy of democratic rule and suggest some kind of conspiracy theory? One can reach the conclusion that such a notion of education does not speak of a human subject but treats individuals as objects influenced by their mothers, society and the Church, since the third womb that the author discusses is God. Education to become a human can, in this view, take place only through the search for Christ the Teacher and God, and trust in religious principles in order to reach the truth by getting to know reality and doing good; to reach beauty by creating and living for others (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Where does this definition place people (parents, children) who do not practice religion? This strongly exclusionary perspective of education reveals the author's radical views. In his article, Mieczysław Krapiec considers nation (family of families) as the most important social form, created in a family where people learn how to live for others, recognise and do good and live Under the influence of God The author also discusses causes of disruption of family and nation, namely the "pseudoculture", which attacks in order to *disintegrate family, first of all marriage, by promoting civil unions, homosexual ones, which will bear no children but deprave everything* (*ibid.*, p. 24). The divagation about education, family, nation, religion and God shows, on the one hand, a perspective of a good civilisation based on religion, and, on the other hand, its opposites – wrong and destructive actions, which disturb social order that the author sees in "traditional education" constituting the foundation for good families and a strong nation. This traditional education divides and strongly stigmatises. It explains both how to be good and who the bad one is. This simplistic model leaves no doubt that the author offers his educational approach to one particular group of people. He considers evil all those who do not fit his definition. There is no place for people thinking freely and

educational spaces ("wombs") do not allow active participation of the educands themselves. Reading Krapiec, one may feel tempted to associate this concept with Huxley's Hypnopaedia described in *Brave New World*. The absence of a child's self-control over his or her life can only result in incapacitation, imposed upon the educated by everyone else claiming it is for the individual's welfare. This stands in striking contrast with the personalism of Fr. Janusz Tarnowski, who, as Bogusław Śliwerski has pointed out, had written of the end of

pedagogy of rulers, strategists and enlightened pundits full of ambitions to change other people, as well as [the end] of pedagogy that uncritically gives prominence to the role of educator. Pedagogy capable of facing the future must be oriented towards living close to others, not keeping a distance from them. Coping with the challenge of this principle becomes, therefore, the core of a different pedagogy, the one "with a human face", rooted in Christianity and expressing itself through authentic dialogue (quoted in Śliwerski 2005, p. 71).

The authors of articles in the this issue of *Civilisation*, fear changes in adult-child relations (in all dimensions: parent-offspring, educator-educand, teacher-pupil) perceiving such transformations as abolishing the monopoly of adults who lose – in new pedagogical theories – their full control over those who have been subject to their power.

Anna Lendzion, another author who points out issues of schooling and education, argues that Polish schools are in crisis and face problems such as, psychologism

that calls for replacing education with psychotherapy, which is no longer a method of treating emotional disorders but becomes a tool in personality development... (Lendzion 2007, p. 53), *generalised accusations of manipulation in education, debunking of apparent actions and pseudo-education, tracing of oppression and indoctrination (enforcing one's ideology) in negative pedagogy. The anti-pedagogy version of negative pedagogy offers absolute reductionism in education* (ibid., p. 54); *promoting the absolute non-directiveness in education, overstressing the child's freedom at the cost of the educator's role in giving directions...* **Representatives of this doctrine oppose the principles of authority, obedience and conformity. The educator's authority should, in their opinion, result from interaction (a reciprocal relationship), in which both sides share mutual respect, recognition and trust** (ibid., p. 55); *disintegration of contemporary education (...) interpreted in post-modernist pedagogy as a desirable effect of relativism of truth and good in historical and cultural perspective...* (ibid., p. 56), **utopianism of education, which is revealed, for instance, in equating education with dialogue and meeting and furthermore in the symmetrical relationship of two subjects and the adult-child partnership (crossing a generational line that divides parent from child and teacher from pupil).** (...) **The cult of freedom, which is understood as a pupil's total autonomy, leads to absolutizing children's rights without proper emphasis on a child's duties** (ibid.).

The selected charges presented above are clearly aimed at non-directive, anti-authoritarian and critical pedagogies and also anti-pedagogy. The accusations concern the disturbing change in relations (in the criticised conceptions a teacher takes the role of facilitator or transformative intellectual who quits his or her traditional role and turns towards dialogue and empathy, recognises pupils' own experiences, rejects oppressive forms of educating, hidden curriculum and symbolic violence in his teaching practice), the replacement of artificially created authorities with the real authority formed in interaction, and exposing violent relationships in education, especially contexts of symbolic violence. A critique of "new pedagogies" reveals a fear of liberating education that provides both educators and the educated with an opportunity to learn and interpret the world according to their own knowledge and experience, and not according to orders of authorities or institutions. Education as discussed in theories that the contributors to *Civilisation* criticise, offers a different perspective on human beings, one that assumes creativity and the absence of fear of freedom. Lendzion worries about education that abolishes obedience and conformity, so she calls for education based on symbolic violence, which produces incapacitated, objectified and other-directed individuals. Lendzion's article advances a view of education and socialisation, which is full of disbelief in the possibility of human liberty, existential creativity and responsibility for one's own life, and finally, that one, can build relationships with others based on authentic values. The author discusses problems that are by no means justified and she misses the contexts of theories she criticises. It seems she does not understand these conceptions. Indeed, the objections she raises reveal her actual support for symbolic violence (the making of conformists, subjugation to artificially created authorities, depreciation of dialogue etc.). Lendzion does not try to understand how oppressive school can be, and how detrimental a bad educator can be. The author is far from the conclusions elucidated by Jacek Kuroń, who argued that

the essence of pedagogical action rests on (...) constraining free will of the educated. The better educator I am, or the more effective is my action, the more likely my pupils will make a choice I want them to make. Therefore, I sacrifice my pupils for the cause I believe in, so I sacrifice them for my own benefit... (Kuroń 1984, p. 12).

In her clumsy critique of the new theories, Anna Lendzion calls for coercive pedagogy – subjugating and pursuing the assumed goals without taking into account the arguments of those who are being educated. This by no means fits the personalist doctrine.

The brief insight into the radical views of the authors shows their reluctance to reflect on education or socialisation from another perspective. The pedagogy expounded by contributors to *Civilisation* does not let other ways of thinking, views or ideas be heard. They appear right when they claim that in numerous situations pedagogical theories remain far behind reality, or when they criticise social institutions, primarily the state and the schooling system, as those that impose schematic constraints on people. Yet one can hardly accept the biased categorical judgements, which marginalise all

views other than those proffered by the authors of the journal. The publication is striking for its lack of an alternative view of education and pedagogical theories and for its one-sidedness and dogmatism. There is no room for a pluralist debate on education. One can notice the authors' certainty that only their perspective is acceptable, that is, only their notion of education is right. One finds such an approach hard to agree with, as contemporary education studies expound a whole range of ideas that should provoke productive debates on education or the roles played by actors involved in this process. The discussed materials from the national conference reveal only one-dimensional thinking about education. One can see as disturbing the fact that the authors offered no theories other than their own radical reading of personalism. Although there are pedagogues thinking in other ways, the contributors to the pedagogical issue of *Civilisation* try to convince us otherwise. Indeed, random readers of the volume might be left with impression that traditional and personalist approaches (understood in a very radical fashion) exhaust the spectrum of pedagogical ideas. The personalism presented in *Civilisation* lacks the perspective of Janusz Tarnowski. This is a striking abuse. It may be worth, therefore, to supplement the above discussion with some correcting notes on critical and emancipatory pedagogies including the so "dreadful" anti-pedagogy.

Omitted pedagogies, or free and self-aware human beings

The problems with understanding new pedagogies often result from taking a viewpoint too narrow to grasp them. Simplistic reading that does not take into account social, political, cultural or economic contexts, hinders the full presentation of a given conception, and even more so its comprehension. Authors' biographies are also relevant in this process. If one omits this multi-layered context, new pedagogical theories seem unclear, banal or even wrong, as the contributors to *Civilisation* claim. What hampers appropriate reading of these theories is that the authors relate them in a simplified way and reduce them to one common denominator, whereas there is no single anti-pedagogy, and no single critical or emancipatory pedagogy. Pluralism, variety and diversity of new tendencies in pedagogy enrich thinking about humanity and education.

The 20th century brought about a large number of new pedagogical theories that reflected radical transformations in thinking about education, school, roles of teachers and students, however educational practice has not changed significantly. As a form of critique of the elites' role in deciding what and how to teach children, youth and adults, numerous authors postulated ways of liberation from stereotypes and stigmas produced in educational relationships located in school and beyond. Critical approaches posed questions not merely about the content or form of the curriculum but also about patterns of educating self-aware and creative humans. The critics demanded a clear answer to the question of who constructs curricula and what hidden contents, especially those

reflecting power relations, the educational programs contain. Why does education focus on restricting individuals' subjectivity and making them reproduce the existing roles? A number of authors in the field of critical and emancipatory pedagogies (including many non-pedagogues) referred overtly to the problem of social inequalities and their consequences for individual freedom and patterns of societal life. Proponents of anti-pedagogy undertook the task of rethinking relations between children and parents, pupils and educators, and reached a perverse conclusion: it is sufficient to assist and facilitate, education as such is not necessary¹. Presenting this perspective, Hubertus von Schoenebeck notes that the basis for

an approach free of educational claim is the respect for the inner world of each human being, also the child's inner world as it is experienced by the child itself (in accordance with our perception) (Schoenebeck 1994, p. 173).

Alice Miller (1994, 1997) discusses quite different dimensions of anti-pedagogy. She presents toxic aspects of education, which produce human tragedies, and argues that people brought up in absence of love, respect and opportunity for self-determination, are unable to function independently. She shows how destructive an educational relationship can be, how children are trapped in their parents' dreams and aspirations, how the social system subjugates people who lack the ability to stand up against it. Miller uses the term "poisonous pedagogy" (literally: "black pedagogy" or "dark pedagogy"; German: "schwarze Pädagogik"), which denotes all violent acts, which, when practiced as a normal elements of education, objectify children and turn them into their parents property and entitle the latter the right to engage in evil-doing in the name of misunderstood love. Miller's books smash pedagogical myths, deconstruct traditional education and expose the effects of abuses of educational power. Representatives of non-directive pedagogy postulate a shift from schematic education, traditional canons and directives that indicate the aims of the educational process, towards empathy, friendship and dialogue. They argue that each human being has the right to have his or her own identity. For example, Carl Rogers advocates relations based on mutual trust, respect and autonomy of participants in educational processes (Rogers 1961). One has to note also non-authoritarian pedagogy that focuses on human self-development, offers new perspectives on conflict, and propagates acceptance and dialogue in educational relations (Gordon 2000). Indeed, these "revolutionary" views constitute an integral part of contestation against social systems, and establish links with countercultural movements and ongoing struggles for a better, more just and more democratic world. The 20th century witnessed numerous revolutions. Some of them resulted in millions of dead, while others transformed human ways of living or thinking. Educational revolutions, that is, new pedagogies, affected ways of educating and were, perhaps, the most

¹ Some of the authors discussing this issue are Schoenebeck, Miller, Braunmühl, Neill, Korczak, Śliwowski and Szkudlarek.

important as they have paved ways for humanness in times of consumerism, ever more aggressive politics and omnipresent technology.

The critique of education, educators and authorities that non-authoritarian or non-directive pedagogies and pedagogues offer, has become a new ground for defining child-adult relations, which previously had rested on assumptions of domination of seniors and the imperative to submit to their power. Civilisation shifts in the later part of the 20th century have had a strong impact on human actions. They transformed the existing systems in quite a revolutionary way. Collective and individual experiences of totalitarianism, the Holocaust, states using political and mental terror against their citizens, schools introducing *a priori* modes of re-socialising their pupils, oppressive notions of education – all those factors must have resulted in radical changes. New theories put a strong emphasis on a child's subjectivity, raised questions about an educator's impact on pupils and identified the state (and its subsystems) as an entity aimed at the programmatic subjugation of children including those who care about and educate them. Parents, teachers, educators – namely, adults – should focus on the task of recognising children's needs, not tell them what is good for them or what they should dream about. Anti-pedagogical mottos, *those who love children, do not educate them or be and encourage rather than educate* highlight the proposed changes in relations (Schoenebeck 1994, pp. 5-12)

Education has become a synonym for intellectual and emotional invasion, and it

takes place whenever there appears somebody who thinks he/she knows better than the child what is good for the it Even though educators come from the outside, they possess certainty that they know better than the person for whom they decide what is good for him/her in life (ibid., p. 40).

Recognition of education as a process restricting freedom, subjectivity and agency of the educated, has become a starting point for reflections on new relations.

Anti-pedagogy focuses on possibilities of forming true, authentic relations between adults and younger generations, based on friendship and freedom. Children and youth reject pedagogical claims by appealing to adults: I am responsible for myself! It is part of my essence of being human. Recognise it and respect it! Support me loyally, but do not educate me as if you knew better (Szkudlarek & Śliwerski 1992, p. 146).

New roles somehow triggered changes in both sides of the education process: children finally gained an opportunity to make their own decisions to affect their own lives with all the consequences; adults have been freed from responsibility for educational decisions. In new pedagogical theories children gained full rights in using language too. Communication allowing the "I" perspective has given children a chance to express their own needs and desires as they feel them (like in Gordon's conception). In addition, a handful of schools introduced changes by consciously withdrawing from

oppressive institutional patterns and creating safe spaces for young people interested in personal development. Alexander Neill and his school have become a leading example in this.

The basis of the Summerhill's system is a belief that education should focus first of all on a child's instincts. The subconscious is far more important than the conscious mind. In our theory, the child should be free to express itself in a way required by inner force that drives the child's actions. We can use here words such as the subconscious or existential force or any other term. This force will find, in one way or another, vent for its energy. If it is set free, it will find its expression in love and creative impulses. If it is suppressed, it will appear as destructive actions, hate as well as illness of body and mind (Neill, quoted in Gribble 2005, pp. 17-18).

New pedagogies have advocated independence, self-development, self-assessment, self-discipline, critical thinking, rejection of claims to traditional roles by parents and educators, justice (and many others) as major principles of human existence. From a situation of being, in all respects, subject to adults' power, the child became their equal partner. Margaret Mead argued that in prefigurative cultures children provide warranty for society's continuity, since they have the best capacity to adjust to rapid developments of the civilisation and the conditions for its existence. Creating systems, which would not restrict children's activity and would not weigh on the young generation with history, tradition or social customs becomes the task of adults. To realise this one must first *create new models for adults who can teach their children not what to learn, but how to learn and not what they should be committed to, but the value of commitment* (Mead 1970, p. 72).

New pedagogical theories freed parents/educators/teachers from their earlier dramatically false role, that of a universal paragon: the know-all, the only righteous and moral model. However, the notion of a non-directive educator assumes much more difficult tasks: he must be **authentic**, not pretend, his feelings must be true, his advice should be helpful and not constitute automatic formulas for keeping the child calm while not solving the child's problems; he must be **cautious** to provide assistance only when truly necessary; he must be **empathic** to use his/her sensibility to become the child's friend; **creative** (Śliwerski 2005, p. 120) since permanent changes are integral part of such educator's habitus; **self-aware** since the educator's views, knowledge and way of living can inspire others. Thus, practically speaking, the educator's responsibility for the child is much larger, because it results from the real care. The teacher who does not have to rely on directives from authorities can withdraw from traditional school repressions aimed at the pupil, and start fostering the child's awareness and self-experience. The educator does not have to follow the objectives and curriculum requirements strictly, as the pupils' own curiosity and free will to learn about reality can become a curriculum in itself. Finally, the "set-free" teacher can leave all models and

authorities behind so that they do not hinder the pupil's personal uniqueness, but help to overcome the child's difficulties in life, not just in school.

Education under oppressive conditions becomes a synonym for manipulation. There is an agenda from above, which assigns what to teach and how to teach it. Teachers select methods that suit them best. What can those people who are to play roles of pupils in such a system do? Two options exist, the first one is to be a docile pupil and accept education, schooling and teachers with no objections. The second is much less comfortable: to protest and resist! Contesting the reality brings hope for changes that, indeed, seem illusory, but at least rebellion can help indicate there is no consent to the social, political and educational *status quo*. Emancipatory pedagogy develops the theme of liberation in a broad context. The school system, authority, social system, culture, politics, economy, interpersonal relations, forms of communication – all these facets (and many others) somewhat determine the efficiency of the project of social subjugation and incapacitation of people who naively see the state as an institution friendly towards them. Emancipation becomes

a process of subjective development expressed in conscious actions aimed at freeing the subject from being dependent on others and confronting and rejecting diverse pressures. It is, therefore, a conscious, emotional, verbal and action-oriented reaction to socially legitimate dependencies and stereotypes by the subject's effort to gain (individual and collective) independence (Czerepaniak-Walczak 1995, p. 14).

One can see as paradoxical, however, that it is the school and teachers themselves – that is, those criticised so strongly – that possess the ability to emancipate the pupil. This emancipation must be universal, egalitarian and it requires all participants to make an effort in order to make it come true. Moreover, it requires that civil society and schooling develop under conditions of a democratic state.

The freedom and human capacities of individuals must be developed to their maximum but individual powers must be linked to democracy in the sense that social betterment must be the necessary consequence of individual flourishing. Radical educators look upon schools as social forms. Those forms should educate the capacities people have to think, to act, to be subjects and to be able to understand the limits of their ideological commitments. (...) Democracy is a celebration of difference, the politics of difference [...] and the dominant philosophies fear this (Giroux 1992, p. 15).

For decades, education and schooling were understood as strongly linked to the existing social system, of which they were integral elements. Political systems determined the school's role and place in society, and also its form and competence.

Critical pedagogy based on theoretical developments of the Frankfurt School, *analyses politics in the context of viewing social reality in its totality that the representatives of the Frankfurt School understand as the universe of human potential, which rests on*

an historically formed notion of humanity (Wiśniewski 2004). This includes political parties' agendas and government policies, along with the effects of "grand politics" on common people. Here we have school and moreover educational and social systems seen as something that causes permanent exclusion experienced not only by pupils but also by their families and local communities. Some aspects of this exclusion are: **educational standards** that do not tolerate difference and are meant to ignore *any form of diversity resulting not only from individual differences but also from social ones*² and close off educational opportunities for pupils who do not want (or cannot) submit to the system (Bernstein 1990; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990); a **common consensus** based on the assumption that schools (and other institutions) function for the benefit of the society, know best what is good for people and any kind of critique is inherently wrong, since those who are critical risk being ostracised (therefore they often prefer to remain silent rather than exposing themselves to social disgrace) (Goffman 1961; Meighan 1986; Wróbel 2006); **persuasion** that authorities and the social system have the right to determine pupil's fate (with the mediating role of school system) subjecting him/her to the law of human resources allocation, thus ascribing the pupil to a position in the social structure (Marcuse 1964; Bauman 1966).

New pedagogical perspectives do not cast a shadow of doubt that one has to break with educational patterns used to date. Consent over subjugation propagated more or less intentionally by institutions and educators, restricts human capacities and leads to existential problems classified as crises. Some firm proposals for change have appeared. These revolutionary propositions in educational change include a few themes. They focus on the celebration of awareness and raising consciousness about submission to authority and ways of emancipation. They point towards concrete situations of educational subjugation that one can observe in any social environment. They offer radical ways of changing education. They suggest new solutions to make education the major tool for creating a better world and more self-aware human beings (Illich 1970; Kuroń 2002; Kwieciński 1997). They emphasise the importance of relations based on real emotions, dialogue and respect.

This brief outline of contemporary pedagogical theories that received so much criticism from the contributors to *Civilisation* shows a vast gap in the different approaches to the human condition. Radical personalism as outlined by speakers at the conference *Classical pedagogy in the face of challenges of the present days* constitutes no alternative to the present situation. This perspective is overwhelming, restricting, divisive and dualistic in its black-and-white view of the world. The ideas that the conference speakers reject are certainly far from perfect, they also contain ideological message and create illusory visions of reality, but their advantage is that they treat humans as subjects and allow them to make their own decisions for which they can take responsibility. These theories expose power relations and propose modes of liberating action. They

² Ethnic differences, especially in case of minority groups, provide an example.

stress the importance of creating one's own identity and using experience in addition to reflexivity to understand the world.

The picture of pedagogy as presented in *Civilisation* is horrifying – not merely because of proposed methods or educational means, but also due to the unreflexive approach of the volume's contributors, who perhaps do not notice the rapid changes in the present and do not grasp the new tasks of pedagogy in the face of new challenges. In order to change anything, one needs to develop the understanding of how fluid our times are. Personalism based on fear, symbolic violence and one-dimensionality lacks this ability to trigger change. *Civilisation's* contributors offer pedagogy suitable for expectations of people who do not comprehend the world and believe that if people cannot understand the reality around themselves then they should be isolated from it. This separation from the reality concerns not only pedagogy, but also religion, politics and culture. People, who feel in danger in their own community, seek solutions in radicalism and symbolic aggression. This kind of approach provides no solution, but instead produces only false conviction that one possesses monopoly on the truth. Fortunately, the reality is quite the opposite. Indeed, people who are open-minded and critically reflexive, are able to see that a single dimension is far too little to live one's life by.

Translated from Polish by Marcin Starnawski

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